



May 20, 2015

TO: CCSWG Chair Geena Davis

FROM: Commissioner Lauri Damrell  
Commissioner Julie Su

Re: Report from Sub-Committee on Gender in the Workplace and Employment

As we know, the issue of the gender earnings gap is very much on the minds of policy leaders, CEO's, low wage workers and advocates here in California. Our State has taken bold actions in the past and during this current Legislative session the Legislative Women's Caucus package of bills, A Stronger California, includes several seeking to provide remedies to close some of the gaps.

Since being established in April, the sub-committee on Gender in the Workplace and Employment has met twice to discuss and develop a strategy for enhanced CCSWG involvement and leadership.

Using our policy and programmatic expertise and working with Nancy Kirshner-Rodriguez, CCSWG and Tonya Lindsey at the CA State Library Research Bureau, we have identified an initial literature review project to examine data, indicators, measures, "causal" factors, theory, and solutions (e.g., programs and recommendations) related to the gender wage gap in California. We do not believe a comprehensive California project like this has been previously pursued by other organizations.

We are attaching a memo summarizing the components of this project that seeks to identify the data and tools needed to answer the question: What explains the gender wage gap?

The Initial research questions include the following:

- Which data sources do researchers employ to measure the gender earnings ratio?
- Which indicators and measures do researchers use to compare women's and men's earnings?
- What are alternative ways to measure the gender wage gap (e.g., total compensation versus income)?
- Which variables do researchers relate to the gender earnings ratio?
- What theoretical frameworks are used to explain the observed gender wage gap?
- What solutions do researchers suggest will address the observed wage gap?
- Which California state departments, agencies, units, policies, and programs exist to address the observed gender wage gap?

If approved by the Commission, this project will initiate greater analysis into issues around the gender earnings gap in California as well as provide the foundation for a proposed October Forum to be held in



conjunction with a Commission meeting in Los Angeles that would focus on presentations on some of the key items we anticipate will be identified including but not limited to:

- Wage theft
- Current available data as well as data we would like to collect
- Corporate initiatives to ensure equal pay
- Policy recommendations to enhance Government action on the wage gap

This forum would provide an opportunity to benchmark the some of the extraordinary strides made in the past 50 years including the changes in the overall make-up of the California workforce; look at how certain professions have significantly changed and legislative and regulatory action that has paved the way for greater gender equity.

In addition, this year also marks the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of California and the Nation's discovery of and action to address one of the worst modern day sweatshops in El Monte, CA. The "El Monte sweatshop case" was a landmark incident that drove us to change how federal and state governments approach the scourge of modern-day slavery with-in our borders. We would propose tying in recognition of this seminal case and how combatting labor trafficking can impact the gender earnings gap. Should the Commission approve the proposed CRB project we will next meet with meet with other partner organizations to discuss any specific research they would like to pursue on their own.

We also believe next steps, following a forum will include:

- A further comprehensive focus on the challenges facing women of color in California as our population surges ; what institutional and cultural as well as unconscious barriers continue to exist in the home, educational systems and workplace
- Identification of Policy and Program changes for future action